

Tale *Feathers*

December -
January
2008

Volume 74
Number 9

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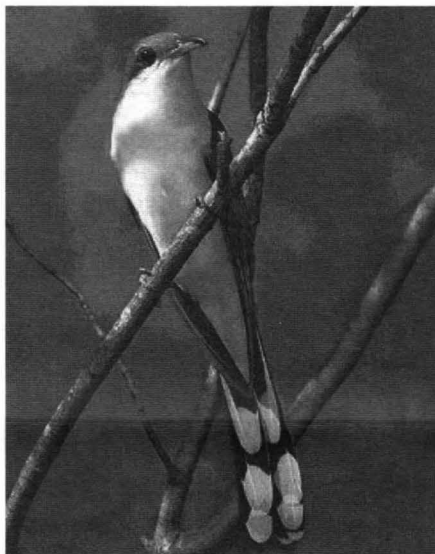
....and MORE!!

Be sure to visit our
website to
get any new info
after publication.

Gypsy Moths and Birds Plus Other Bird Studies at Tyson Research Center

Tuesday, January 15, 2008 at 7:00 p.m.

Powder Valley Nature Center



Nick Barber, PhD candidate at UMSL will discuss several of his research projects, including work at the Tyson Research Center. Much of Nick's work involves the ecological interactions between birds, insects and plants.

The non-native gypsy moths entered North America many years ago and have had a dramatic impact on the forests of the Northeast ever since. Their spread has been clearly documented and with few natural enemies, it is quite inevitable they will ultimately have a huge impact on Missouri

forests. Nick has been studying the correlation between gypsy moth defoliations and populations of certain forest birds, especially Black-billed and Yellow-billed Cuckoos. Cuckoos are some of the few North American birds known to ingest large numbers of hairy caterpillars, and their distributions vary annually due to insect outbreaks. Gypsy moths can also act as physical ecosystem engineers because their defoliations change forest habitat structure, which can influence local breeding bird distribution and success.

Nick Barber is a PhD candidate in the Ecology, Evolution, and Systematics program at the University of Missouri, St. Louis Biology Department. His dissertation research examines the various interactions between birds, insects, and plants. Nick received a graduate scholarship from SLAS in 2006. He received his BS in biology at St. Louis University and has been birding the St. Louis area for more than seven years.

From the intersection of Interstates 44 & 270, take Watson Rd. to Geyer Rd. Turn north on Geyer and cross the bridge to Cragwold Road on your left. Go west on Cragwold for 1 mi. to nature center entrance on right. Follow drive to parking lot. Enter building through left entrance. Questions, call Mitch Leachman at 314-739-5112.

St. Louis Audubon Society

Opportunities

and

Announcements

Mission Statement of

The St. Louis
Audubon Society

Help our community
sustain biological
Diversity through
Nature.

Goals

To foster an aware-
ness and under-
standing
of birds and other
wildlife and their
habitats

To educate our com-
munity so people
can make
informed decisions
about the natural
world.

AUDUBON SOCIETY LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS

The St. Louis Audubon Society announces a training class that is starting up for their speaker's bureau in their elementary education program. The speakers will be available free to schools and will cover topics ranging from birds to bats to plants.

"We are truly excited about this program. Environmental education is a big part of what Audubon is all about and what better place to start than at the elementary level," said local chapter president,
Torrey Berger.

St. Louis Audubon Society, with 2,200 members, has a local focus on education, conservation and habitat restoration. It annually participates in Operation Clean Stream, conducts monthly general interest meetings, bird walks and song and shore bird habitat reclamation and restoration.

Applications are now being accepted for the January, 2008 class. Training will be a total of 10 hours.

Call Vicki Flier for applications or more information at 314-968-9166.

Conservation Updates

Karen B. Meyer

We can report some good news about topics discussed in recent months.

The House did pass a farm bill with a slight **increase for conservation**, but stay tuned (see below) to nudge your Senators.

The HR 767 Refuge Ecology Protection Assistance and Immediate Response Act will provide grants for projects that **manage harmful non-native species** by detecting early infestations and restoring native habitats. Currently native fish and wildlife are not protected from non-native species on federal refuge lands. The American Bird Conservancy is lobbying for passage of this legislation, and you can learn more about it from Darin Schroeder, dshroeder@abcbirds.org.

The Bush Administration recently announced various commitments to advance Migratory Bird Conservation, which should **help birds in decline** by restoring and securing habitats and wintering grounds.

Wilderness designation is being requested for seven areas in Missouri, most being in the Mark Twain National Forest. You can learn more from the Missouri Wilderness Coalition at www.mowild.org, and contact Senator Bond for his support.

Need a New Year's resolution? Want to know how to **take action** by contacting elected officials at the most critical time? If you're not signed up already, go to www.audubon.org, and in the "Get Active" section click on Audubon E Activist Sign Up. For local issues (such as the newly proposed Missouri coal plant) stayed tuned to the Missouri Coalition for the Environment, www.moenviron.org.

CHANGES, CHANGES

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Torrey Berger

They are a coming. They are inevitable. We live in a changing age. Although change is not always easy, St. Louis Audubon must adapt and must change the way it does things in order to continue functioning efficiently.

The availability of the internet, coupled with the U. S. Postal Service's and the printing industry's seeming inability to stop sky-rocking mailing and printing costs has forced SLAS to a decision to convert our newsletter to primarily an email delivery.

Although this will have start-up costs, in the long run, it will provide financial benefits and benefits to the environment as well. There will be more about this change in this and future issues of *Tail Feathers*.

For many years, SLAS has had the luxury of operating in the black without the necessity of spending the limited time of our great volunteers in fund raising. Because they are most valuable doing their education and conservation activities, we are not going to start a bunch of fund raising activities, but we have decided to send a year-end appeal letter to help us acquire the funds to keep us in the black, while at the same time meeting the ever-increasing needs and opportunities to advance our mission.

One thing that has not changed, and will not change, is SLAS's position as the St. Louis organization for conservation education. Just this last month our Education Team made no less than 40 class presentations at 20 area schools to over 800 students. In addition, our new program to provide graduate studies scholarships in Latin America is off to a good start and is receiving national attention. This program is just one example of both the challenges and opportunities provided by our changing world.

We hope that the changes coming will not cause inconvenience for you and that you will see them not only as change but as growing pains.

Torrey

January & February Bird Walks & Trips

Pat Lueders

January 12, Saturday, 9:00 am—Riverlands

Mike Thelen will be leading this tour of Riverlands
Migratory

Bird Sanctuary, our primary winter birding area. It is always windy and 20 degrees colder near the lake, so dress warmly. We will be looking for unusual gulls, ducks, eagles, etc. We will meet at the Teal Pond parking lot. There will be a special leader on this trip for beginners and all level of birders are welcome.

February 3, Sunday, 8:00 am & 1:00 pm— Riverlands

Bill Rowe will be leading an all day tour of Riverlands and the St. Charles birding areas. Participants can do the all day trip, or come for just the morning or the afternoon. We will meet at the Teal Pond parking lot at 8:00 am and bird Riverlands and the St. Charles area. We will eat lunch at noon at the Alton McDonald's, or you can bring your own. We will reconvene at Teal Pond again at 1:00 pm and bird Riverlands, Illinois, and possibly the Confluence. Bill is an expert on all birds, including gulls, so this will be a "don't miss" trip for all birders.

February 16, Saturday, 1:00 pm—Baldwin Lake & Peabody Coal

Our SLAS president, Torrey Berger, will be leading this very popular trip. We will meet at Baldwin Lake in Baldwin, IL, an unusual warm water lake in winter, a result of the UE Power Plant residue. Last year, a Black-legged Kittiwake was seen at the lake as well as other gulls, terns, and numerous ducks. We will then bird the Peabody Coal reclamation area near Baldwin Lake. At dusk, we hope to see the Short-eared Owls beginning hunting. Last year, over 37 owls were seen roosting at Peabody. Bring your cameras to capture this awesome spectacle of nature!

Northern Cardinal photo submitted by
Dave Beidel

Christmas Bird Count Your Chance to Get Involved!

Here is your chance to get involved a real citizen science event that has been going for 107 years. From December 14, 2007 through January 5, 2008, people from all over the North American, South American continents, The Caribbean and The Pacific will be getting out to count birds that are spending an early winter. Last year, 2,052 CBC lists were submitted and 69,354,406 birds were counted. It's easy too! You don't have to be an expert birder: you just have to count.

CBC's are being set up now. In Missouri, only two are currently scheduled, with more to areas to be listed soon. The CBC's scheduled as of Mid-November are:

December 15, 2007 in Columbia, MO

Contact: Susan Hazelwood 573-445-4925 or
hazelwood@mchsi.com

December 27, 2007 at Clarence Cannon NWR

Contact Scott Schuette 636-795-9215 or
sschuette01@hotmail.com

There are other counts being held throughout Missouri and Illinois. As more are become available later in November and December, check the following websites:

www.audubon.org

www.birdsource.org

www.mobirds.org

On the MOBIRDS website, click on "LISTING", then click on "CBC", then click on "current and past CBCs"



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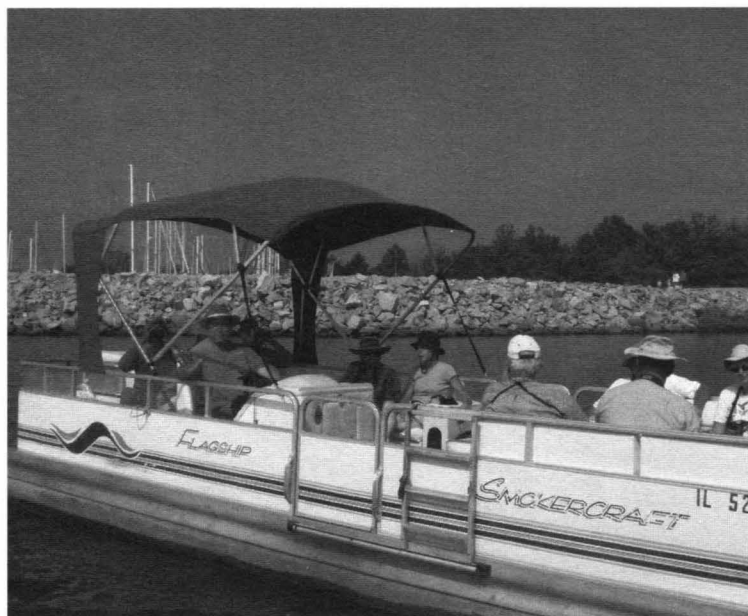
Talefeathers Newsletter going Electronic

The St. Louis Audubon Society has decided to join many other organizations and move to electronic newsletters. This move will take place in mid-2008 at which time we will discontinue the full distribution of the printed *Talefeathers* as you have known it. We are doing this to save cost, the volunteer time involved in putting out the paper version and the uncertainty of the scheduling of our printing company. This should avoid the problem that we have had of newsletters arriving at your homes after an announced event has already been held. In addition, the electronic form will give us the flexibility to send out occasional short newsletters when items of special interest come up. From an environmental standpoint this switch will also save the paper on which 2500+ newsletters are printed.

In order for you to receive your electronic newsletter we will need your e-mail address. As soon as possible send your e-mail address to Sue Gustafson at smgustafson@juno.com. **Please include your regular mailing address and zip code for cross checking purposes.** Sue will compile the addresses into an updateable data base.

We will mail a limited number of paper newsletters to any of our members who do not have e-mail access. This may be a much simplified version of our current *Talefeathers*. If you do not have an e-mail address and still wish to receive the newsletter you must mail a note to our post office box P.O. Box 220227, St. Louis, MO 63122.

Failure to send either your e-mail address or a specific request for continuation of a paper newsletter will result in your not receiving any newsletter. However, we will mail out the annual calendar to all of our members in August of each year. Included will be instructions for putting your e-mail address into the data base and/or requesting the paper version of *Talefeathers*.

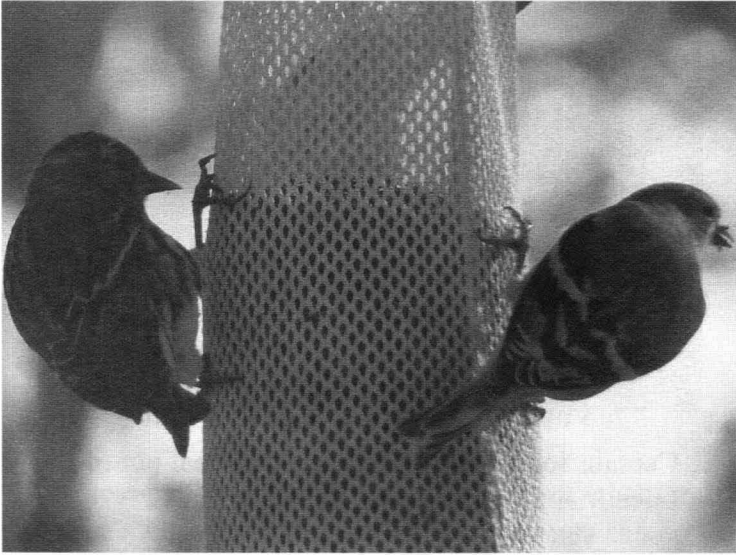


Captain Joe Eads steering pontoon boat out of Carlyle Lake Marina on the recent Pelagic trip.



Gulls following the pontoon boat on Carlyle Lake. Both photos submitted by Pat Lueders, SLAS Bird Trip Leader.

This could be a really active winter at our backyard bird feeders!
Purple Finches and Pine Siskins are already visiting many backyards.
The pictures were submitted by Dave Pierce, a former SLAS board member and currently assisting with the chapter webpage.



Pine siskin on left; American Goldfinch on right.
Note heavy streaking on the Pine siskin.

Lower right: Female Hairy Woodpecker. Note her longer bill.

Below, a Caroline Wren visits the bird bath.

Below, a Red-breasted Nuthatch, another winter visitor to feeders.



Preview:
Laura Erickson—For the Birds

February Joint Meeting with WGNSS



Mark your calendar for Friday, February 8 at 7:30 p.m. at the Creve Coeur Community Center.

Laura Erickson is the host of the radio show "For the Birds" and serves as staff ornithologist for Binoculars.com. She also writes regularly for BirderBlog.com and is the author of *101 Ways to Help Birds*, *For the Birds: An Uncommon Guide* and *Sharing the Wonder of Birds with Kids*. Laura will speak on one of the many amazing bird topics that fill her head, heart and books.

This is an "advance" announcement for the February joint program. Please mark your calendar and reserve the time as you will not want to miss this one. More detailed info will follow on our website and in the February newsletter

This is our annual joint meeting with the Webster Groves Nature Study Society, so you will have twice the people to meet and twice the opportunities to discover. The meeting is open to all, members or not.

From I-270 and Ladue, go east on Ladue, left at the light at New Ballas, go ¼ mile north to the Creve Coeur Government Center at 300 N. New Ballas. Community Center is in the north-west corner of the lower level (closest to Olive and Ballas).

Questions, call Mitch Leachman at 314-739-5112.

Tale Feathers

Tale Feathers is published monthly by the St. Louis Audubon Society. Messenger Printing prints 2,400 copies of each newsletter on recycled paper using soy ink. Mary Dueren edits the newsletter. To contact the editor, call evenings to 314-576-1473 or email: mdueren@charter.net.

St. Louis Audubon Society 2007 - 2008

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ST. LOUIS AUDUBON SOCIETY

St. Louis Chapter ONLY Membership Application

By using this Application, your membership dues will go directly to the St. Louis Audubon Society Chapter. Your membership dues will support local issues that are important to you, programs at our general meetings, and *Tale Feathers*, our newsletter.

Chapter Only Dues are \$15.00 per year and cover all members living at the same address.

Please complete the form, enclose a check payable to SLAS, and mail to:
St. Louis Audubon Society, P.O. Box 220227, Kirkwood, Missouri 63122.

PLEASE PRINT

Circle One.

NEW

RENEWAL

Name:

Address:

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

E-mail (optional):

Note: Do Not Use This Form to Join or Renew Membership in the National Audubon Society.

To join National and receive the National Audubon Magazine (as well as Tale Feathers),
please contact www.audubon.org for an additional application.